CLAIMS

1. A scheduling system for use in broadcasting comprising:

i) a scheduler for selecting and scheduling broadcast elements for broadcasting; and

ii) a user input data store for storing user input data

in which the scheduler is adapted to access the user input data store and to schedule broadcast elements, the scheduling of one or more broadcast elements being at least partially determined by stored user input data.

2. A scheduling system according to Claim 1 wherein, in use, the user input data store stores one or more user inputs.

3. A scheduling system according to either one of the preceding claims wherein, in use, the user input data comprises data relating to user inputs.

4. A scheduling system according to any one of the preceding claims wherein, in use, stored user input data comprises one or more broadcast elements.

5. A scheduling system according to any one of the preceding claims wherein, in use, stored user input data identifies one or more broadcast elements.

6. A scheduling system according to Claim 5 wherein at least one identified broadcast element comprises an item from a playlist.

7. A scheduling system according to either one of Claims 5 or 6 wherein at least one identified broadcast element comprises material sourced externally to the broadcasting system.

8. A scheduling system according to Claim 7 wherein at least one identified broadcast element comprises live material.

9. A scheduling system according to any one of the preceding claims which further comprises an asset store for storing broadcast elements to be scheduled by the scheduler.

10. A scheduling system according to Claim 9 wherein the asset store is adapted to store data relating to the broadcast elements, in addition to storing broadcast elements.

11. A scheduling system according to any one of the preceding claims which further comprises a user input processor for processing user inputs.

12. A scheduling system according to Claim 11 wherein, in use, at least one user input comprises a broadcast element and the user input processor comprises an editing tool for use in editing broadcast elements.

13. A scheduling system according either one of Claims 11 or 12 wherein the user input processor is adapted to sort user input data according to type.

14. A scheduling system according to any one of Claims 11, 12 or 13, for use in supporting more than one broadcast channel during the same broadcast period, wherein the user input processor is adapted to sort user input data according to channel.

15. A scheduling system according to any one of Claims 11 to 14 wherein the user input processor is adapted to parse user input data.

16. A scheduling system according to any one of Claims 11 to 15 wherein, in use, stored user input data identifies at least one broadcast element, and wherein the user input processor is adapted to measure a number of times said broadcast element is so identified.

17. A scheduling system according to Claim 16 wherein the scheduler is adapted to rank broadcast elements in accordance with the number of times the elements are so identified.

18. A scheduling system according to any one of Claims 11 to 17 wherein, in use, the user input processor is connected to deliver processed user inputs for storage in the user input data store for use by the scheduler in scheduling broadcast elements.

19. A scheduling system according to any one of Claims 11 to 18 wherein the system is provided with a first output for scheduled broadcast elements for broadcasting and a second output for processed user inputs and/or broadcast elements.

20. A scheduling system according to any one of the preceding claims, further comprising time dependent control means to control the action of the scheduler according to time period.

21. A scheduling system according to Claim 20 wherein the time period comprises part of a day, such that the action of the scheduler can be controlled to be different at different times of day.

22. A scheduling system according to Claim 20 wherein the time period comprises one or more days, such that the action of the scheduler can be adjusted to be different on at least two different days.

23. A scheduling system according to any one of Claims 20, 21 or 22 wherein the scheduler is adapted to select and schedule broadcast elements, and wherein the time dependent control means is adapted to control the selection of said one or more broadcast elements in a time dependent manner.

24. A scheduling system according to any one of Claims 20 to 23 wherein the scheduler is adapted to schedule broadcast elements by applying at least one rule, and wherein the time dependent control means is adapted to control the rule or rules applied in a time dependent manner.

25. A scheduling system according to any one of the preceding claims adapted for connection to a communication system for receiving user inputs.

26. A scheduling system according to Claim 25 having a response time of the order of ten minutes between receipt of a user input and delivery of a response which is at least partly dependent on the result of a scheduling operation by the scheduler in relation to the received user input.

27. A scheduling system according to Claim 26 wherein said delivery of a response comprises broadcasting of a broadcast element.

28. A scheduling system according to Claim 26 wherein said delivery of a response comprises the output of a communication in reply to the user input.

29. A broadcast assembly system for assembling broadcast elements for broadcast, the system comprising an asset store for storing one or more broadcast elements, and an asset processor for processing broadcast elements, wherein the asset store, in use, stores at least one rule or algorithm for use in assembling broadcast elements for broadcast and the asset processor provides at least one tool for processing broadcast elements by editing.

30. A broadcast assembly system according to Claim 29, the system further comprising a scheduler for assembling broadcast elements by scheduling.

31. A broadcast assembly system according to either one of Claims 29 or 30 wherein at least one stored rule or algorithm comprises a scheduling criterion for use in scheduling broadcast elements for broadcast.

32. A broadcast assembly system according to Claim 31 wherein the scheduling criterion comprises a rule or algorithm for responding to at least one user input.

33. A broadcast assembly system according to either one of Claims 31 or 32, wherein the asset processor comprises means to create or modify at least one scheduling criterion.

34. A broadcast assembly system according to any one of Claims 32 to 33 wherein at least one stored rule or algorithm is time dependent.

35. A broadcast assembly system according to any one of Claims 29 to 34, wherein the asset processor comprises means for creating or modifying one or more broadcast elements.

36. An interactive gaming system comprising a broadcast assembly system according to Claim 35.

37. A broadcast assembly system according to any one of Claims 32 to 36, further comprising a user input processor, and wherein the scheduling criterion comprises a rule or algorithm for responding to processed user inputs.

38. A broadcasting system comprising:

i) an asset store for storing broadcast elements;

ii) a user input data store for storing user input data;

iii) an asset processor for processing broadcast elements; and

iv) a user input processor for processing user inputs,

wherein the user input processor is adapted to process user input to provide user input data for storage in the user input data store and the asset processor is adapted to process broadcast elements for storage in the asset store.

39. A broadcasting system according to Claim 38 wherein the asset processor comprises an encoder for encoding broadcast elements.

40. A broadcasting system according to either one of Claims 38 or 39 wherein the asset processor comprises an editing tool for editing broadcast elements.

41. A broadcasting system according to any one of Claims 38 to 40 wherein the asset processor comprises a programming tool for programming data and/or processes relating to broadcast elements.

42. A broadcasting system according to any one of Claims 38 to 41 wherein the asset processor comprises a programming tool for programming scheduling criteria.

43. A broadcasting system according to any one of Claims 38 to 42 wherein, in use, stored user input data comprises at least one broadcast element.

44. A broadcasting system according to any one of Claims 38 to 43 arranged to provide more than one channel for broadcasting broadcast elements.

45. A broadcasting system according to Claim 44 arranged such that two or more channels each carry a unique set of broadcast elements.

46. A broadcasting system according to Claim 44 arranged such that two or more channels share at least one broadcast element from the asset store.

47. A broadcasting system according to Claim 44 arranged such that two or more channels share at least one broadcast element from stored user input data.

48. A broadcasting system for supporting more than one independently interactive broadcasting channel.

49. A user input processor for use with a broadcasting system according to any one of Claims 38 to 48, having an input for receiving user inputs, at least one processing tool for processing received user inputs, a first output for processed user inputs for use by the broadcasting system in scheduling broadcast elements and a second output for processed user inputs.

50. A user input processor according to Claim 49 wherein the second output is adapted for connection to the Internet.

51. A user input processor according to either one of Claims 49 or 50, for use in supporting more than one broadcast channel during the same broadcast period, wherein the user input processor is adapted to sort user inputs according to channel.

52. A method of broadcasting, said method comprising the steps of:

i) receiving a list of broadcast elements;

ii) receiving a user input relating to at least one broadcast element, and

iii) responding to the received user input.

53. A method according to Claim 52 wherein a received user input comprises at least one broadcast element in addition to the listed broadcast elements.

54. A method according to either one of Claims 52 or 53 wherein a received user input comprises at least one identifier for a broadcast element from the list.

55. A method according to either one of Claims 53 or 54 wherein step iii) comprises broadcasting the additional broadcast element together with at least one broadcast element from the list.

56. A method according to any one of Claims 52 to 55 wherein step iii) comprises outputting a reply to the user input.

57. A method according to Claims 53 and 56 wherein said reply comprises an estimated broadcast time for the additional broadcast element.

58. A method according to any one of Claims 52 to 57 wherein step iii) comprises re-ordering the list of broadcast elements.

59. A method according to any one of Claims 52 to 58 wherein step iii) is performed in an hour or less of step ii).

60. A method according to any one of Claims 52 to 59 wherein step iii) is performed in ten minutes or less after step ii).

61. A method according to any one of Claims 52 to 59 wherein step iii) is performed in two minutes or less after step ii).

62. A method according to any one of Claims 52 to 59 wherein step iii) is performed in ten seconds or less after step ii).

63. A method according to any one of Claims 52 to 62, further comprising the steps of:

iv) receiving at least one user input identifying at least one of the broadcast elements on the list; and

v) generating a re-ordered list of programme broadcast from said list, in accordance with the at least one user input.

64. A method of assembling broadcast elements for broadcasting, said method comprising the steps of:

i) processing at least one broadcast element and loading the processed broadcast element to an asset store;

ii) receiving, via a user input, data relating to at least one broadcast element in the asset store; and

iii) storing one or more rules or algorithms for use in assembling a set of broadcast elements for broadcast in accordance with received data.

65. A method according to Claim 64, further comprising the step of assembling a set of broadcast elements for broadcast in accordance with received data and at least one stored rule or algorithm.

66. A method according to either one of claims 64 or 65 wherein at least one stored rule or algorithm is time dependent such that an assembled set of broadcast elements is different at different times.

67. A method according to any one of Claims 64 to 66, further comprising the step of receiving, via a user input, at least one broadcast element, and wherein an assembled set of broadcast elements comprises at least one broadcast element received via a user input.

68. A method according to any one of Claims 64 to 67 which further comprises the step of broadcasting an assembled set.